

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of network authentication comprising:
receiving a ~~common user~~ first credential from a user seeking access to an information network;
~~generating a unique credential after receiving the common user credential from the user,~~
~~the unique credential comprising network specific information associated with a connection of~~
~~the user; and~~
generating a first network generated credential comprising network specific information
associated with a connection of the user;
replacing the first credential received from the user with the first network generated
credential; and
considering the ~~unique~~ first network generated credential in connection with making an authentication decision for the user.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving ~~the common user~~ a second credential from a different user seeking access to the information network, wherein the second credential matches the first credential;
~~generating a different unique credential for the different user that comprises different~~
~~network specific information; and~~
generating a second network generated credential comprising network specific
information associated with a connection of the different user;
replacing the second credential received from the different user with the second network
generated credential, wherein the second network generated credential is different
from the first network generated credential; and
considering the ~~different unique~~ second network generated credential in connection with making an authentication decision for the different user.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the connection of the user comprises an xDSL link.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the connection of the user comprises a link at least partially supported by a cable modem.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising utilizing a network node to generate the network specific information ~~unique credential~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the network specific information comprises a ~~unique~~ circuit identification number associated with an ADSL connection.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the network specific information comprises a virtual circuit identification associated with ADSL routing.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising tracking a metric associated with the user.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the metric is selected from the group consisting of an access control metric, a payment metric, and a security metric.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 5, wherein the network node comprises an authentication server and an interface operable to receive the ~~common-user~~ first credential.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining that the user does not have access rights to the information network; and
initiating communication of a deny response.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the network specific information comprises information that is ~~unique~~ specific to a physical location of the user.

14. (Currently Amended) An authentication system, comprising:
an interface operable to receive an authentication request from a Point-to-Point Protocol over Ethernet (PPPoE) client of a ~~given~~ user, wherein the authentication request comprises a credential received from the user;

a customizing engine communicatively coupled to the interface and operable to: ~~add a unique identifier for the given user to the authentication request; and~~

generate a network generated credential comprising network specific information associated with a connection of the user; and
replace the credential received from the user with the network generated credential; and

an output device communicatively coupled to the customizing engine and operable to output the ~~unique identifier~~ network generated credential to an access engine for consideration of the network generated credential in connection with making an authentication decision [[of]] for the ~~given~~ user.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising a network node that comprises the interface, the customizing engine, and the output device.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, further comprising the access engine, wherein the access engine is communicatively coupled to a repository comprising acceptable credentials, further wherein the access engine is operable to compare the ~~unique identifier~~ network generated credential against the acceptable credentials as a part of granting access rights to the ~~given~~ user.

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the authentication request from the PPPoE client comprises ~~an included identifier that~~ a credential that does not uniquely identify the ~~given~~ user.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising a piece of customer premises equipment comprising a broadband modem, the broadband modem operable to output the authentication request to the interface.

20. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, further comprising a service provider network node that comprises the interface, the customizing engine, and the output device.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, further comprising:
a communication path operable to form at least a part of an interconnection between the broadband modem and the Public Internet; and
the access engine, wherein the access engine is communicatively coupled to a repository comprising acceptable credentials, further wherein the access engine is operable to compare the ~~unique identifier~~ network generated credential against the acceptable credentials as a part of granting the given user an access right to the communication path.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the ~~unique identifier~~ network generated credential comprises a ~~unique~~ circuit identification number associated with an ADSL connection.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the ~~unique identifier~~ network generated credential does not ~~uniquely~~ specifically identify the piece of customer premises equipment or the broadband modem.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable data to receive a request for access to an information network, the request comprising a credential; to replace the credential with a network generated credential comprising network specific information associated with a connection of ~~that uniquely identifies a connection in use~~ by a user seeking access to the information network; to compare the network generated credential against a stored collection of acceptable credentials; and, to issue a permit response if the network generated credential is acceptable.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 25, wherein the credential comprises a commonly assigned credential that does not ~~uniquely~~ specifically identify a requestor.